

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please replace all prior versions of the claims with the following claim listing:

Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A cooling tunnel for articles of candy, comprising:
 - a driven conveyor belt being designed and arranged to support articles of candy and to convey them through said cooling tunnel in a moving direction;
 - a treating region for articles of candy, said treating region being surrounded by an insulating plate and by a cover;
 - an upper cooling unit being arranged in a region above said conveyor belt, said upper cooling unit including a channel being designed and arranged for cooling air to flow therethrough;
 - a bottom cooling unit being arranged in a region below said conveyor belt, said bottom cooling unit including a cooling plate being designed and arranged for cooling liquid to flow therethrough, said cooling plate in said treating region being designed and arranged to be spaced apart from said insulating plate in a vertical direction, a free space being formed between said cooling plate and said insulating plate, the free space having a width; and
 - a plurality of distance elements, said distance elements being designed and arranged to support said cooling plate in said treating region, said distance elements being arranged to be distributed over the width of the free space ~~a roller path arranged below the insulating plate to transport the lower portion of the conveyor belt.~~
2. (Previously Presented) The cooling tunnel of claim 1, wherein the free space and said cooling plate each have a height, and wherein the sum of the heights of the free space and of said cooling plate corresponds to the sum of the heights of a channel and of a belt supporting sheet of a cooling tunnel operated with cooling air in the region of the bottom cooling unit.

3. (Cancelled)
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Cancelled)
7. (Original) The cooling tunnel of claim 1, wherein the free space is designed as a channel.
8. (Original) The cooling tunnel of claim 2, wherein the free space is designed as a channel.
9. (Cancelled)
10. (Original) The cooling tunnel of claim 7, wherein said channel is designed as a return conduit of said upper cooling unit.
11. (Original) The cooling tunnel of claim 8, wherein said channel is designed as a return conduit of said upper cooling unit.
12. (Cancelled)
13. (Original) The cooling tunnel of claim 10, wherein said channel is designed to be open in a lateral direction and to be surrounded by said cover.
14. (Original) The cooling tunnel of claim 11, wherein said channel is designed to be open in a lateral direction and to be surrounded by said cover.

15. (Cancelled)
16. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for cooling articles of candy, comprising:
a driven conveyor belt being designed and arranged to convey articles of candy through said apparatus in a moving direction;
an insulating plate;
a cover, said cover and said insulating plate being designed and arranged to form a region of treatment for articles of candy;
an upper cooling unit being substantially arranged in a region above said conveyor belt, said upper cooling unit including a channel for cooling air;
a lower cooling unit being substantially arranged in a region below said conveyor belt, said lower cooling unit including a cooling plate for a cooling fluid, said cooling plate being designed and arranged to be substantially spaced apart from said insulating plate in a vertical direction; ~~and~~
~~a roller path arranged below the insulating plate to transport the lower portion of the conveyor belt.~~
a free space being formed between said cooling plate and said insulating plate, the free space having a width; and
a plurality of distance elements, said distance elements being designed and arranged to support said cooling plate in said treating region, said distance elements being arranged to be distributed over the width of the free space.
17. (Cancelled)
18. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein a channel is formed between said cooling plate and said insulating plate.
19. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said conveyor belt is located at a working height corresponding to a working height of cooling tunnels operated with cooling air in the region of the lower cooling unit.

20. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 ~~17~~, wherein the free space and said cooling plate each have a height, and wherein the sum of the heights of the free space and of said cooling plate corresponds to the sum of the heights of a channel and of a belt supporting sheet of a cooling tunnel operated with cooling air in the region of the lower cooling unit.

21. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein said channel being formed between said cooling plate and said insulating plate and said cooling plate each have a height, and wherein the sum of the heights of said channel and of said cooling plate corresponds to the sum of the heights of a channel and of a belt supporting sheet of a cooling tunnel operated with cooling air in the region of the lower cooling unit.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein said channel being formed between said cooling plate and said insulating plate is designed as a return conduit of said upper cooling unit.

26. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein said channel being formed between said cooling plate and said insulating plate is designed to be open in a lateral direction and to be surrounded by said cover.

27. (Currently Amended) A cooling tunnel for articles of candy, comprising:
- a driven conveyor belt being designed and arranged to support articles of candy and to convey them through said cooling tunnel in a moving direction;
 - ~~a treating region for articles of candy, said treating region being surrounded by an insulating plate and by a cover;~~
 - an insulating plate;
 - an upper cooling unit being arranged in a region above said conveyor belt, ~~said upper cooling unit including a channel being designed and arranged for cooling air to flow therethrough; and~~
 - a bottom cooling unit being arranged in a region below said conveyor belt, said bottom cooling unit including a cooling plate being designed and arranged for cooling liquid to flow therethrough, ~~said cooling plate in said treating region being designed and arranged to be spaced apart from said insulating plate in a vertical direction, a free space being formed between said cooling plate and said insulating plate;~~
 - a plurality of distance elements extending between said insulating plate and said cooling plate, wherein at least one of said distance elements is disposed under said cooling plate; and
 - a cover having a length in the moving direction of the conveyor belt, and wherein the length of said cover and said insulating plate surround at least a portion of the conveyor belt and define a treating region.
- ~~wherein the cooling plate of the bottom cooling unit includes a flat upper sheet and a lower sheet, the lower sheet having a plurality of grooves through which the cooling liquid flows.~~

28. (Currently Amended) The cooling tunnel of claim 27, wherein the cooling plate of the bottom cooling unit includes a flat upper sheet and a lower sheet, the lower sheet having a plurality of grooves through which the cooling liquid flows, and wherein the lower sheet of the cooling plate has a corrugated shape.